

MINUTES OF BENTON COUNTY QUORUM COURT

December 28, 2006

A regular meeting of the Benton County Quorum Court was held on Thursday, December 28, 2006 at 5:00 p.m. at the Benton County Administration Building, 215 East Central Avenue, Bentonville, Arkansas, pursuant to proper call and notice.

County Judge Gary Black called the meeting to order.

Deputy Clerk Betsy Deaton called roll as follows:

11 JP's Present:	Adams, Harrison, Hill, Sampier, Schindler, Sheridan, Stephenson, Summers, Tharp, Wolf, Wozniak
2 Absent:	Allen, Moore

The presiding officer led the pledge of allegiance to the flag, and Bill Rogers of the Word of Life Church led the prayer.

MINUTES:

JP Adams made motion to approve the Minutes of the regular meeting of November 30, 2006 as distributed, seconded by JP Sheridan. Motion to approve the minutes carried by voice vote.

COUNTY JUDGE'S REPORT:

County Judge Gary Black yielded to Human Resources Director Barbara Ludwig, who reported on several goals achieved by the Human Resources Department in 2006, including the implementation of direct payroll deposit, an online enrollment system for employee health insurance, flex spending accounts for health or childcare expenses, and changes made to the Employee Health plan which have resulted in lower costs to the county. She stated that the new standards have encouraged employees to get healthier, and noted that 24 employees had participated in a smoking cessation class, and they are planning another one in the spring. She added that several departments have had weight-loss contests.

County Judge Gary Black then yielded to Planning Director Ashley Pope, who stated that the county adopted the International Building and Fire Codes in 2006, and also began issuing building permits. She stated that they held the annual Flood Awareness days in conjunction with local schools, and results of the poster contest are on display in the Planning Office. She said that the Planning Board is averaging about 12 agenda items per month, and continues to deal with all aspects of major developments including septic disposal, environmental and storm water impact. She said that the Planning Department issued over 600 building permits in 2006, and they have increased the response time to questions from the public to the same day or within 24

hours. She said gross receipts for the Planning Department totaled \$341,000. County Judge Gary Black asked how that compared to the budget. Ashley Pope stated that the gross receipts exceeded the increase in the budget due to the implementation of the permitting process. She said that Building Permits are going to fall a little short of projections, but they are looking closely at the process.

County Judge Gary Black yielded to Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Bryan Saxton, who distributed copies of the 2004 and 2005 Cash Flow Report from the Prosecuting Attorney's office.

County Judge Gary Black announced that the Annual Jail Inspection Report has been received, and both the County Jail and Juvenile Detention Center received good reports.

County Judge Gary Black stated that the four Justices of the Peace who will be leaving the Quorum Court at the end of 2006 will each receive a plaque recognizing them for their service to Benton County. JP Wozniak made the presentation to JP Tharp, JP Summers to JP Sheridan, JP Stephenson to JP Sampier, and JP Schindler to JP Adams. County Judge Gary Black noted that JP Allen could not attend tonight's meeting, and had received his plaque at the December 12, 2006 Committee of Thirteen meeting.

ELECTED OFFICIALS REPORT:

Assessor Shirley Sandlin thanked the Quorum Court for their support during her administration, and that this Quorum Court was one of the "creams of the crop", and she had been through several "crops". She stated that she feels she is leaving the Assessor's office in good hands with Bill Moutray, that the reappraisal is on schedule, and all of the legislative audits have gone well.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Don Day stated that he wanted to thank the Quorum Court for volunteering for the thankless job of Justice of the Peace. He said he had gotten to know several of them and felt that their votes on various items were sincerely cast based on information they were supplied with. He said he would never forget JP Tharp's reaction when told that Beaver Water District officials maintained that the Quorum Court had requested the infamous Watershed Protection Ordinance, which JP Tharp vociferously denied. He quoted a column by Charley Reese which appeared in the Benton County Daily Record and which stated that the burden and cost of environmental laws are placed almost solely on the property owner, which amounts to a free ride for environmentalists. He applauded the move by then-Environmental Committee Chair JP Bob Tharp and Long Range Planning Committee Chair Kurt Moore to allow more time for public comment at their committee meetings. He said he hoped it would continue and also be allowed in Committee of Thirteen meetings. He wished them all the best in the coming year.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

- (A) Proposed Resolution Granting a Waiver of the Policy as Established in Sec. 2-534 of *The Code of Ordinances of Benton County* Regarding Salary Ranges for the Position of GIS Coordinator, Department 49, Information Systems, Fund 010

Deputy Clerk Betsy Deaton read the proposed Resolution in full. JP Stephenson made motion for approval, seconded by JP Sheridan. JP Stephenson stated that this request was discussed at the Committee of Thirteen, and the waiver is needed due to increased market pressure, and the desire to retain the services of a valued employee. JP Summers noted a typographical error and made motion for a friendly amendment to the Resolution, seconded by JP Stephenson.

There being no further discussion, a roll call vote was recorded as follows:

10 yeas: Harrison, Hill, Sampier, Schindler, Sheridan,
Stephenson, Summers, Tharp, Wolf, Wozniak
1 nay: Adams
2 absent: Allen, Moore

Resolution duly adopted and assigned No. **R-2006-24.**

OTHER BUSINESS:

JP Sheridan expressed appreciation for the plaque he received, and stated that he had enjoyed working with all of the Justices of the Peace. He added that his interest at all times was with the benefit of Benton County.

JP Adams stated that his term had been interesting and that nothing he ever said or questioned was in any way meant to be taken as a personal attack. He said that he was brought up to believe that if you believed in something you should fight for it at all costs, no matter what people thought. He said that he believes that if a bill is good, it will withstand questioning, and he felt it was his duty at times to serve as the cooling pot. He advised the new Justices of the Peace not to sit back and only learn the first year, but to embrace the challenge that has been presented to them. He also advised them to listen to their constituents.

JP Tharp stated that it had been a privilege to serve District 11, Benton County, and the Quorum Court. He said it had been an excellent 2-year period, and he had known at the beginning that it would be a big job to fill Dodie Evans' shoes. He said he knew they would be in good hands with Bobby Hubbard coming on board, and he would always hold this Quorum Court in high esteem and close to his heart.

JP Sampier stated that as a person who has been involved in municipal government most of his life, this has been a very educational experience. He said he had learned a lot, and had tried to discharge his duties as the law and his conscience dictated. He said he enjoyed the exchange of ideas and opinions with all of the JPs, and all of the relationships had been very rewarding. He said that local government is a big challenge because every citizen is a Sunday morning quarterback. He said he has always said that every citizen should be required to serve a period of time in local government. He advised the new Justices of the Peace to grind axes at home, that

this is not a private pulpit, and to remember that they are not administrators, but legislators. He also added that they do not represent the residents of Benton County, only the residents of their district, and wished them the best.

JP Wolf noted that there are fewer and fewer familiar faces, and advised the new Justices of the Peace not to let those who scream loudest determine their vote, but to determine their own votes, because that is why they were elected.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

County Judge Gary Black stated that the swearing in ceremony will take place at 10:00 a.m. on January 2, 2007, in Judge Tom Keith's courtroom. He said that the Organizational Meeting of the Quorum Court will take place at 11:30 a.m., or immediately following the swearing-in ceremony.

There being no further business to come before the court, upon motion and second the meeting was adjourned at 5:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary L. Slinkard,
County Clerk

Prepared by: Betsy Deaton